

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 2 have been amended and are presented for reconsideration and further examination in view of the following remarks.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA) and in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,181,436 to Kurachi.

By this Response and Amendment, claims 1 and 2 have been amended and the rejection of claims 1 and 2 respectfully traversed.

Support for the amendments to claims 1 and 2 can be found, for example, in paragraph [0038] of the published application, which recites that "[t]he controller...controls the stencil printing machine...to execute a secret operation after the data is printed by the number of copies designated by the printer driver," and in paragraph [0043] of the published application, which recites that "after the completion of printing, the used stencil sheet is removed from the print drum...and the removed stencil sheet is disposed of."

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that no new matter, within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §132, has been introduced. In addition, the amendments are meant only to clarify the invention as set forth in the application as filed, and are not intended to limit the scope of the claims.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 2 as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Kurachi.

Response

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested since not all of the features of the claims are disclosed, taught, or suggested by the prior art.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, the Examiner must establish: (1) some suggestion or motivation to modify the references exists; (2) a reasonable expectation of success; and (3) that the prior art references teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. *Amgen, Inc. v. Chugai Pharm. Co.*, 18 USPQ2d 1016, 1023 (Fed. Cir. 1991); *In re Fine*, 5 USPQ2d 1596, 1598 (Fed. Cir. 1988); *In re Wilson*, 165 USPQ 494, 496 (CCPA 1970).

Claim 1, as amended, recites "[a] printer driver...for setting items of various printing conditions for [a] stencil printing machine including a number of copies to be printed[.]" If the printer driver determines that a watermark print item is selected, "the printer driver automatically selects a secret operation item, said secret operation item instructing said stencil printing machine to remove a used stencil sheet from a print drum and dispose of said used stencil sheet after said number of copies have been printed[.]"

Claim 2, as amended, recites "[a] printer driver...for setting items of various printing conditions for [a] stencil printing machine including a number of copies to be printed[.]" If a watermark print item is selected, "a selection screen of a secret operation item...is displayed." "[I]f the printer driver determines that said secret operation item is selected, the printer driver automatically selects a secret keeping operation for print data, said secret operation item instructing said stencil printing machine to remove a used stencil sheet from a print drum and dispose of said used stencil sheet after said number of copies have been printed[.]"

The Examiner acknowledges that the AAPA does not teach the feature of incorporating a secret operation setting into the printer driver, and moreover does not teach the feature of automatic selection of the secret operation setting if the printer driver determines that a watermark print is selected. The Examiner cites Kurachi in attempting to cure the deficiency of AAPA.

Kurachi teaches a print managing system and print managing method. In Kurachi, “[a] secret setting information input device (not shown) enables the selection whether or not [an] encryption is executed.” See column 13, lines 55 - 62.

Kurachi fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a printer driver having a secret keeping operation “instructing said stencil printing machine to remove a used stencil sheet from a print drum and dispose of said used stencil sheet after [a selected] number of copies have been printed.”

In contrast with a printer driver having a secret operation item according to the present invention, Kurachi teaches an information input device which selects whether print data is encrypted. Kurachi is completely silent as to a printer driver setting for a secret keeping operation instructing the printing machine to “remove” or “dispose” of any physical element, let alone removing a used stencil sheet from a print drum and disposing of the used stencil sheet after all copies have been printed.

Further, the Examiner maintains that “watermark print is widely known and available in the art” and that “setting defaults for automatically selecting certain features/functions are well known and widely available in the art” by citing supporting references. However, nowhere in Kurachi does the reference discuss the selection of a secret operation item for print data *in cooperation with the selection of a watermark print item*. Applicant respectfully asserts that the Examiner has not shown a basis in the prior art for the knowledge that printer drivers can conditionally select a secret

operation item according to the present invention when a watermark print item is selected, let alone a secret operation item "instructing said stencil printing machine to remove a used stencil sheet from a print drum and dispose of said used stencil sheet after [a selected] number of copies have been printed."

As the combination of AAPA and Kurachi fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a printer driver according to amended independent claims 1 and 2 of the present invention, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes the application is not in condition for allowance, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney if it is believed that such contact will expedite the prosecution of the application.

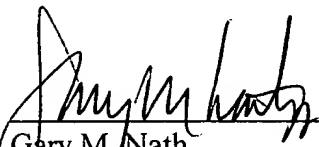
In the event this paper is not timely filed, Applicant petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 14-0112.

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NATH & ASSOCIATES PLLC
112 South West Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Tel. (703) 548-6284
Fax. (703) 683-8396

Respectfully submitted,
NATH & ASSOCIATES PLLC

By:



Gary M. Nath
Registration No. 26,965
Gregory B. Kang
Registration No. 45,273
Matthew J. Moffa
Registration No. 58,860
Customer No. 20529